

Traffic Records Division

The Missouri State Highway Patrol's Traffic Records Division currently has responsibility of being a clearinghouse for all statewide traffic crashes, both Patrol and non-Patrol, as well as maintaining the Patrol's Traffic Arrest System and the DWI Tracking System for the entire state. In addition, the Fatality Analysis Reporting System compiles detailed information concerning all fatal crashes and reports that information to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Although the duties of compiling accident data has always been a responsibility of the division, the division name, as well as its other duties have changed several times since 1931.

During its 75-year existence, the Patrol has seen the number of accidents statewide increase from 7,141 in 1931 to over 182,000 annually. The number of Patrol-investigated accidents increased from 935 in 1931 to a current number over 40,000. The state saw the number of traffic fatalities fluctuate from a low of 488 in 1942, to a maximum of 1,521 in 1969, and a present day level of approximately 960.

1930s

The Patrol began analysis of traffic crashes practically at its inception; however, the reports were not handled administratively by a Patrol component dedicated to that function until the Bureau of Safety was created in the mid-1930s. Ultimately, Technical Sergeant D.C. Snedaker was named director of the bureau. Historical records state the Patrol assigned an officer to attend the eight-month session of the Traffic Safety Institute at Northwestern University and, after the officer's graduation in 1938, the officer was placed "in charge of the Safety Division". Given the dates, one would assume Sgt. Snedaker was the officer who attended, and thus, was probably the first Patrol employee to attend the Traffic Safety Institute.

Analysis of accidents prompted the Patrol, in 1937, to advocate compulsory driver's testing in order to ensure safe drivers on the road, and to advocate compulsory accident reporting in order to ensure more complete data was obtained concerning traffic crashes. A driver's license requirement became effective in 1938; however, passing a driver's test to obtain the license was not a prerequisite to obtain the license.

The number of accidents investigated by the Patrol during the decade rose from 935 in 1931 (September through December 1931 only) to 3,005 in 1939, while statewide fatalities did not significantly change from the total of 862 in 1931. Early on, the Patrol recognized alcohol was a significant factor in many accidents. In 1939, the Patrol reported that one in five fatal crashes and one-sixth of all crashes involved the use of alcohol. At the time, even a first offense of driving while intoxicated was a felony.

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Sergeant C.L. Jacoby was appointed the Bureau of Safety director in either 1939 or 1940.

1940s

World War II brought significant changes to vehicular traffic in the state with traffic control in war production areas being the greatest problem the Patrol had to deal with. The sections of the state in which war construction took place were in rural areas and, as a consequence, the workers had to travel to the work sites in private vehicles. These vehicles, along with other construction vehicles, created congestion from which traffic crashes were inevitable. During this time, the Patrol gained much needed knowledge concerning controlling traffic in war traffic zones. This is evidenced by the fact that during the construction period of Fort Leonard Wood there were 73 traffic fatalities, but during the later construction period of Camp Crowder there was only one. The experience gained at Fort Leonard Wood also allowed the Patrol to handle traffic in other war construction areas more effectively.

During the construction period of military installations the number of accidents rose; however, the severity declined due to fact that highway congestion prevented excessive speeds. However, once the construction ended and production at those facilities began, the volume of traffic dropped enough that excessive speed again became a primary issue in an increasing number of crashes.

The Safety Division directly contributed to the war effort by maintaining a liaison between the national Highway Traffic Advisory Committee and the local administration of the War Transportation Conservation Committees in cities of 10,000 or more population. This work consisted of the formation of group rides to conserve cars and tires in the war effort, and the staggering of hours to remove and smooth out the peak loads on public transportation facilities that had occurred from the increased use of mass transportation. The contribution was vital in that it served the purpose of keeping the public transportation in operation for the duration of the war and helped keep civilian life as trouble free as possible.

The number of accidents investigated by the Patrol during the decade rose from 4,535 in 1940, to 10,481 in 1949. Statewide fatalities decreased significantly during the war years, apparently due to restrictions on travel created by rationing. In fact, there were 488 fatalities in 1942, which is the least number of fatalities during the Patrol's history. This was a 42 percent reduction from the previous year's total of 839, and the largest percentage decrease as well as the second largest numerical decrease (351) in Patrol history. Unfortunately, this decade also had the two greatest annual percentage increases in Patrol history. Statewide fatalities increased 25 percent from 537 in 1944, to 670 in 1945, and 28 percent from 670 in 1945, to 857 in 1946. The increase in fatalities for these two years was blamed on the removal of driving restrictions after VJ Day.

Apparently, the designation of Bureau of Safety was changed to simply the Division of Safety in 1941 or 1942, because documentation indicates

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Sergeant G.D. Sontheimer was appointed director of the Safety Division in either 1941 or 1942. The division's responsibilities included accident records along with public education. While the division received all information on traffic fatalities statewide, it was recognized that information on all statewide accidents was not received because of motorists' failure to report accidents and due to the lack of a central clearinghouse in the state for accident information. The Patrol advocated mandatory accident reporting stating only one in three accidents were being reported. Intoxicated drivers continued to be a problem in the state. DWI was a felony at the time and current statutes made it difficult to gain convictions. As a result many drunk drivers were prosecuted for careless and imprudent driving, which was a misdemeanor. Due to this, the Patrol advocated legalization of chemical tests to determine a driver's level of intoxication in all states including Missouri.

In 1944, the Patrol urged examination of new drivers and pointed out that driver examinations were essential in controlling incapable drivers, careless drivers, and drivers with lengthy accident records.

On January 1, 1946, eight safety officers (one in each troop) were assigned to conduct public programs. Administrative coordination of the program was part of the Safety Division's duties. On November 1, 1947, Captain J.A. Berglund was named the Safety Division director. He would ultimately hold the position for over 19 years, which is significantly longer than any of the other directors.

On March 7, 1947, a Missouri State Traffic Safety Conference was held in Jefferson City. It was conducted as a follow-up to the President's Highway Safety Conference that was held in Washington D.C. in May 1946. The conference was called to spur local communities, state officials, and other organizations to intensify a program of coordinated traffic safety activities in an attempt to stop the rising tide of traffic accidents in the state. Participants in the conference included representatives from national, state, county, and municipal agencies. The activities initiated by the conference appear to have had an effect as evidenced by the fact that the third largest annual reduction in the number of fatalities in Patrol history took place in 1947 with a decrease of 174 deaths.

1950s

The number of accidents investigated by the Patrol during the decade rose from 13,169 in 1950, to 18,695 in 1959. The number of fatalities during this time period fluctuated from a low of 889 in 1950, to a high of 1,129 in 1956.

The division continued to coordinate the safety officer program during this decade, and the number of officers assigned to the program was increased to nine in 1950. In 1952, the Patrol began administering driver examinations statewide. Troopers were originally trained to administer the tests. In 1955, civilian driver examiners were hired who had this sole responsibility. The Safety Division was assigned administrative supervision over the driver examination program and would keep this duty until 1979.

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In 1953, the Division of Safety and Administration was created with Captain Berglund as the director. The division included sections for Accident Records, Driver's License Examination, Public Information and Safety Education, Weight Station Operations, Building Maintenance, and Statistics. The following year, Publications was added to the duties. In 1957, Weight Station Operations was removed from the division duties and assigned to the newly created Division of Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement.

1960s

The number of accidents investigated by the Patrol during the decade rose from 20,122 in 1960, to 35,511 in 1969. While there was an initial decrease in fatalities from 1960 to 1961, the number of fatalities during this decade continued to increase after 1961 from 932 to 1,521 in 1969, with 1969 having the most fatalities in the Patrol's history after the second highest annual increase in 1968 of 173.

In 1966, the Patrol was reorganized and the Safety and Administration Division was assigned to the chief of staff. The division retained responsibility for accident reports, driver examination, public information and education, and the safety officers. It also was charged with handling Police Demand Orders from the Department of Revenue and included a machine tabulating section that processed, tabulated, and prepared summaries of all arrest reports, accident reports, officer's daily reports, inventory, recovered cars, recovered property, and vouchers. The following year Captain Berglund was promoted to major and named chief of staff and Captain Franklin W. Shadwell was named the director of the Safety and Administration Division.

1970s

The number of accidents investigated by the Patrol during the decade fluctuated from a low of 30,453 in 1974 to a high of 38,581 in 1972. Fatalities began the decade with a high of 1,466 in 1970; however, took a positive turn when they dropped twenty-eight percent from 1,449 in 1973 to 1,042 in 1974. This is the highest numerical decrease in fatalities in Patrol history and the second highest percentage reduction.

On January 1, 1970, the Safety and Administration Division was renamed the Traffic Division. Captain Shadwell remained the director and the division retained all of the previous duties with the exception of machine tabulating. Captain Charles S. Endicott was named division director on February 1, 1973. On October 1, 1973, the division was assigned to the chief of Field Services and retained all of its previous duties including the Patrol museum.

In January 1972, creation of the Statewide Traffic Accident Reporting System (STARS) was announced. The system was to be designed for collection of all statewide traffic crash data, which made the division responsible for collecting traffic crash data from police agencies in the state. A transition began from accident summaries to collection and coding of accident reports from municipalities in the state in an effort to standardize the data collected and

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provide a method of obtaining meaningful statewide traffic accident information. STARS became fully operational in 1973, and the division completed the transition from accident summaries to coding of reports. In January 1974, the division began receiving accident reports on a statewide basis. The division coded the reports and supplied contributing agencies with monthly, semiannual, and annual summaries of accidents investigated by those agencies. In 1975, the division began supplying the contributing agencies with an accident locator summary to assist them with pinpointing high accident locations in their areas.

In 1976, a photographic unit was established in the Traffic Division. Later, the unit would be assigned to the Crime Laboratory Division, Budget and Procurement Division, and, ultimately, the Public Information and Education Division.

On August 1, 1979, the Traffic and Criminal Records Divisions were combined to become the Records Division and was placed in the newly created Technical Services Bureau. The new division included the Accident Records Section, Criminal Records Section, and Motor Vehicle Theft and Information Section. Responsibility for the safety officers was transferred to the Safety Education and Information Division, and driver examination was transferred to the newly created Driver and Vehicle Regulation Division.

1980s

The total number of accidents statewide entered by the division into STARS rose from 142,307 in 1980 to 182,258 in 1989. The number of accidents investigated by the Patrol during the decade fluctuated from a low of 27,048 in 1982 to a high of 32,896 in 1988. Fatalities began the decade with a high of 1,190 in 1980 and fluctuated through a low of 908 in 1982, before ending with 1,052 in 1989.

On June 1, 1980, Captain Norman E. Tinnin was named the director of the Records Division. Less than one year later (May 1, 1981) the accident records and criminal records functions were separated into the Traffic Law Enforcement and Criminal Records divisions, and Captain Jesse M. Luker was named the Traffic Law Enforcement Division Director. The new division had administrative responsibility for the following:

1. Statewide Traffic Accident Reporting System (STARS) -- The section processes all accident reports completed by both the Patrol and other law enforcement agencies statewide.
2. Missouri State Highway Patrol Arrest and Uniform Traffic Ticket Audit Section -- The section maintained the computerized Patrol arrest file as well as supervised the computerized audit system for all Uniform Traffic Tickets (UTT) issued and used by the Patrol. The section also began conducting quarterly field audits of each troop's UTT file.
3. Selective Enforcement Section --The section was responsible for analyzing accident and enforcement data for the purpose of developing selective and innovative selective traffic enforcement

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programs. The section was responsible for coordinating and implementing legislative, judicial, and special projects including federally funded highway safety programs. The section also supervised the FARS unit.

4. Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) -- Federally funded unit that used STARS data to locate fatal traffic accidents in Missouri. The unit received coroner reports to capture statistics on intoxicated drivers involved in fatal accidents. Data is also collected on the total driving history of all drivers fatally injured. The information was compiled and subsequently encoded into a national database for use in evaluating fatal accidents nationwide.
5. Safety Education and Information Officers' Section -- This included administrative responsibility for 15 officers assigned to nine troops.
6. GHQ Message Center.

Although FARS was housed with the Patrol, the unit apparently remained attached to the Missouri Division of Highway Safety until January 1, 1985. Personnel assigned to FARS use the STARS database to identify fatal traffic crashes. The traffic safety analysts assigned to the unit also obtain documents from driver's licensing and motor vehicle registration files, Missouri Department of Transportation files, death certificates and vital statistics, coroner/medical examiner reports, hospital medical reports, and EMS reports. An extensive detailed analysis of the fatal crash is then conducted and the data forwarded to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

An internal reorganization on January 1, 1982, resulted in the division being renamed the Traffic Division. The division retained the responsibilities assigned in 1981; however, also acquired responsibility for the newly created Alcohol and Drug Offense Records System (ADORS) along with the Patrol's Traffic Arrest System (TAS). Senate Bill 513, which passed during this legislative session, made several changes to the state's DWI laws and also allowed for the establishment of a centralized records system within the Patrol to maintain all alcohol- and drug-related conviction information whether municipal or county ordinance, or state law violations. The formal operation of the ADORS Section within the division was scheduled to begin on July 1, 1983, and several officers were assigned to the division to assist in its development and implementation. It was anticipated at the time that the new system would cause the amount of correspondence coming into and out of GHQ to double and the workload in the division to increase significantly. As a result, a dedicated mailbox for ADORS was established which is still in use today.

On July 1, 1983, the ADORS became operational. Court dispositions were required to be sent directly from the courts to the Traffic Division where prior to this date the dispositions were first sent to the Department of Revenue. As a result of ADORS and the Traffic Arrest System, the division was divided into two sections, Arrest Records and Accident Records. Accident Records was responsible

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for STARS, FARS, and the safety education officers. Arrest Records was responsible for ADORS, the Patrol's Automated Traffic Arrest System, establishment and maintenance of the Uniform Traffic Ticket number assignment system for the state of Missouri, and the UTT Audit System. The division also maintained the GHQ message center.

ADORS resulted in all alcohol- and drug-related driving convictions being entered into the system, which was part of the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES). During the first five months after ADORS became operational over 8,000 alcohol- and drug-related driving convictions were processed and entered into the system. After entry, this information was made available to law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and judges.

Traffic offense disposition information began to be forwarded by the courts to the Patrol's Arrest Records Section for entry into the Traffic Arrest System (TAS). Up until then, officers were required to look up dispositions on their arrests. This freed the officers for more service-oriented tasks. The TAS began with 65,000+ Patrol dispositions being entered during the first 5 months of the year. The decade ended with 17,502 ADORS dispositions and 288,499 TAS dispositions being entered into the system in 1989 by division personnel.

On January 1, 1988, Captain Robert J. Hagan was named the Traffic Division Director. TAS information had previously been only available to the Patrol. During this year, changes were made to TAS/ADORS, which made TAS information available to other criminal justice agencies. On June 1, 1989, administrative responsibility for the troop safety officers was transferred from the Traffic Division to the Safety and Information Division.

1990s

The total number of accidents statewide entered by the division into STARS rose from 185,189 in 1990 to 193,890 in 1999. The number of accidents investigated by the Patrol during the decade showed a steady increase from 32,205 in 1990 to 41,895 in 1989. Fatalities fluctuated throughout the decade beginning in 1990 with 1,097 and ending in 1999 with 1,094. The least number was in 1993 with 949 and the highest number was in 1997 with 1,192. The decade ended with 20,731 ADORS dispositions and 318,242 TAS dispositions being entered into the system in 1999 by division personnel.

In 1991, the division was reorganized into three sections including the Accident Records Section, FARS Section, and Arrest Records Section. There were four division directors assigned during the decade with Captain G. Paul Corbin being named on September 1, 1991; Captain William L. Baucom on August 1, 1992; Lieutenant James G. Watson on March 1, 1994; and Captain Stephen R. Johnson on October 1, 1997. Lieutenant Watson was promoted to captain on February 1, 1995.

Throughout the history of the division there had always been a uniformed officer assigned as the assistant director. On September 1, 1994, former Jefferson City Police Officer Russ Dunwiddie became the first civilian assistant

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director of the division and only the second civilian assistant division director in Patrol history.

On October 1, 1999, FARS celebrated its 25th anniversary. This was the 14th year it had been assigned to the Patrol.

2000s

The total number of accidents statewide entered by the division into STARS has declined thus far this decade with the least number being entered in 2006 with 167,143 and the most in 2000 with 193,778. The highest annual number of fatalities was 1,255 in 2005. This was the highest number since 1973. However, not only did 2006 show a nearly 13 percent decrease in fatalities to 1,096, but 2007 and 2008 resulted in 992 and 961 fatalities, respectively, which are the lowest since 1993.

Three new directors have been assigned to the division since 2000. Captain Charles R. Jackson was named director on February 1, 2000; Captain Terry W. Moore on July 1, 2001; and Captain Bradley W. Jones on August 1, 2005. In addition, the name of the division was changed to "Traffic Records" on July 1, 2009. The name changed to better reflect the function of the division within the organization.

The division FARS analysts have received several awards relating to their work with the system. In 2000, Traffic Safety Analyst III Sandra K. Cole received a special achievement award at the 2000 FARS Annual Conference. She also received the Excellence In Service Award in 2002, 2006, and 2007. Both Traffic Safety Analyst III Cole and Traffic Safety Analyst III Sheila R. Ponder received "Outstanding Analyst Award for the NHTSA Region 7" at the 2002 and 2003 FARS Annual System-wide Training Conferences. In addition, Traffic Safety Analysts Cole and Ponder, and the Assistant Director Russ Dunwiddie received awards in 2008 for their work and support of FARS.

On February 14, 2005, the Traffic Arrest System/DWI Tracking System (TAS/DWITS) replaced the Traffic Arrest System/Alcohol and Drug Offense Records System (TAS/ADORS). DWITS improved upon ADORS by being a Web-based computerized database of alcohol-related driving offenses, and by including more information than ADORS such as detailed arrest information, prosecutorial actions, and court dispositions. It is an automated system available statewide to authenticated criminal justice personnel and agencies.

Currently, the Traffic Division has 26 full-time employees and is divided into three sections. The Patrol Accident Records Section has six full-time employees assigned and is supervised by Traffic Safety Analyst Karen Forbis. The section receives and processes all accident reports completed by Patrol officers, receives and processes all reconstruction reports completed by CRASH team members and Technical Accident Reconstructionists, and houses the FARS unit. The section also administers the GHQ message center. In 2007, the section processed over 37,000 Patrol accident reports. In addition, the troop accident clerks and the personnel assigned to this section responded to over 45,000 requests for copies of accident and reconstruction reports.

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The Non-Patrol Accident Records Section has eight full-time employees assigned and is supervised by Traffic Safety Analyst Michelle Green. The section receives and processes all accident reports completed statewide by agencies other than the Patrol. In 2007, the section processed over 128,900 accident reports and conducted STARS training for local law enforcement personnel at each troop headquarters.

The Arrest Records Section has six full-time employees assigned and is supervised by Traffic Safety Analyst Michelle Stegeman. The section's primary responsibilities include entry of dispositions in TAS/DWITS, as well as dissemination of Uniform Citation (UC) numbers to law enforcement agencies statewide, and conducting audits of Patrol Uniform Citations. In 2007, the section entered over 310,000 dispositions in the Traffic Arrest System, nearly 22,000 convictions in DWITS, disseminated 464 blocks of UC numbers, and conducted UC audits at all troops.

In May 2006, the Patrol fully implemented an accident report auto entry application, which facilitated electronic submission of motor vehicle accident reports/data from the field to the STARS. The latest analysis indicated crash reports are reaching the STARS within an average of 9.75 from the date of the crash versus 22.5 when submitted via paper.

Directors

The division and its predecessors have seen 16 directors throughout its history. They are as follows:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Dates Assigned</u> | <u>Unit Name</u> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Tech. Sgt. D. C. Snedaker | 1938 | Bureau of Safety |
| Sgt. C. L. Jacoby | 1939 or 1940 | Bureau of Safety |
| Sgt. G. D. Sontheimer | 1941 or 1942 | Safety Division |
| Capt. J. A. Berglund | 11/1/47 to 12/31/66 | Safety Division |
| | | Safety & Administration Division |
| Capt. Franklin W. Shadwell | 01/01/67 to 01/31/73 | Safety & Administration Division |
| | | Traffic Division |
| Capt. Charles S. Endicott | 02/01/73 to 05/29/80 | Traffic Division |
| | | Records Division |
| Capt. Norman E. Tinnin | 06/01/80 to 04/31/81 | Records Division |
| Capt. Jesse M. Luker | 05/01/81 to 08/31/88 | Traffic Law Enforcement Division |
| | | Traffic Division |
| Capt. Robert J. Hagan | 09/01/88 to 08/31/91 | Traffic Division |
| Capt. G. Paul Corbin | 09/01/91 to 07/31/92 | Traffic Division |
| Capt. William L. Baucom | 08/01/92 to 02/28/94 | Traffic Division |
| Capt. James G. Watson | 03/01/94 to 09/30/97 | Traffic Division |

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| Capt. Stephen R. Johnson | 10/01/97 to 01/31/00 | Traffic Division |
| Capt. Charles R. Jackson | 02/01/00 to 05/28/01 | Traffic Division |
| Capt. Terry W. Moore | 07/01/01 to 07/31/05 | Traffic Division |
| Capt. Bradley W. Jones | 08/01/05 to Present | Traffic Division |
| | | Traffic Records Division |